

**Michigan Joint Select Committee on the Flint Water Public Health Emergency**  
**Flint Public Hearing**  
**Tuesday, March 29, 2016 at 10:00 a.m.**  
**Northbank Center, UM-Flint**

**INTRODUCTION REMARKS**

**DAYNE WALLING**

**FORMER MAYOR OF THE CITY OF FLINT, MICHIGAN**

March 29, 2016

Chairman Senator Stamas, Senate Minority Leader Ananich, and  
Honorable Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to take part in the public hearing.

*few comments then can answer all your questions*

The drinking water crisis in Flint is a catastrophe. It has had a devastating effect on our families, our most vulnerable children and seniors, our schools, neighborhoods, businesses and the entire community. Flint is a strong city and I know it will survive. And with the right support, it will thrive. But Flint never should have suffered in this situation.

As a father raising my own family in Flint, I am deeply concerned for the children and all people who have been affected. I am sorry ~~this crisis happened~~ every single day. I appreciate the Committee's efforts to identify what went wrong and why--so problems can be fixed, Flint can move forward, and this never happens again in our home state. The public hearing today is taking place more than 5 months after the City of Flint issued the first government lead advisory and Genesee County declared a public health emergency. It is urgent Flint's water be made 100% safe, and trust is restored.

*victims are cared for*

*truly  
that I didn't realize what was happening  
Sooner.*

From my experience as mayor until November 2015, I have <sup>a few</sup> ~~8~~ main points:

- 1) Michigan's financial manager system focused too much on cutting costs without adequate safeguards and transparency

2) City did not have the experience & capacity in place to manage a new water source

2) The regulatory agencies provided false assurances to us about the safety of the water and withheld information about the risks of the water

4) ~~Governor Snyder discounted~~ local concerns and has not acted with urgency

State agencies and the Governor were discounted

It is my hope that this committee's leadership and example will begin to heal the wounds of neglect. Your willingness to conduct a public hearing here in Flint and to allow residents to participate is a sign of hope and a step in the right direction. Still Waiting on Gov Snyder

There are a number of unanswered questions--even after the task force report--that I hope this committee will address so there is a clear basis of understanding in place and solutions can be developed for the real problems. One unanswered question is who was the highest state official <sup>to</sup> that approved the switch to the Flint River? State law requires emergency managers to gain approval for major financial decisions. Who was it in Lansing who made the final financial decision for Flint to spend money and budget to go to the river? EM Kurtz signed the documents in June 2013 but not <sup>certainly</sup> without the ok of state officials. <sup>release of the</sup>

The public also deserves to know who was the highest state official to approve the flawed water treatment design for Flint? We are all too aware now the treatment design did not include <sup>phosphate</sup> corrosion control and it did not include the activated carbon filter, which

<sup>The filer</sup> would have made the water easier to treat and would have averted the problems with trihalomethanes, or TTHMs, <sup>altogether</sup>. The phosphate <sup>would have protected against corrosion and lead.</sup>

My observation is that there is a lack of coordination among state agencies involved in EM's decisions at the expense of residents. EMs are shielded from the natural transparency inherent in the Home Rule Act. <sup>essential</sup> It is ~~even more necessary~~ to have the right experts guiding decisions to protect the true bottom line-which is

people's health and welfare. ~~And after nearly two years of water problems, there are basic questions that have not been answered.~~

From day one with the river, the state regulatory agency, the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality provided assurances to us that the Flint water was safe and met the standards of the Safe Drinking Water Act. I had my own concerns about the river and was hearing concerns from the public but I relied on the information provided by the MDEQ and City's public works leadership that was appointed by the managers. My family and I drank the water ~~in our home~~. I also echoed these assurances to the public—which I wholly regret. I urge the committee to push for full transparency and the public release of all water tests so citizens know exactly what is happening with their water at all times.

Until the MDEQ admitted in October 2015 that it had not properly applied the lead and copper rule in Flint, the agency was insistent Flint was meeting the standards and had to test before adding corrosion control. When Dr. Edwards' research had come out, Congressman Kildee and State Senator Ananich raised questions to the State and EPA. I joined them in a meeting with the regulators in Lansing to get answers. The MDEQ representative insisted that the law required the testing delay and went on to say that when Flint started using water from KWA that there would have to be another testing delay until optimized corrosion control was allowed. The MDEQ representative said this was the law. You see, this was not a local decision; it was a state mandate.

For some reason, the Governor's office has continued to this day to maintain there was local discretion even in the face of the task force report which concluded it was a state decision. I can tell you from my experience, the culture at the MDEQ is not going to be changed in a meaningful way if the truth is not faced honestly by the Governor and his team. The City of Flint has shortcomings and mistakes were made, I know that as well as anyone. You can walk

up the street and find many challenges at City Hall today. But the decision about corrosion control was made by the state, in spite of concerns raised by city personnel and the EPA.

Tragically, there were opportunities missed and dismissed that could have averted the water crisis. I called for reforms and programs in January 2015 to make the water safe with test results being publicly released; items that are still awaiting State action. I contacted the Governor directly with my plan, as I believe any mayor in a crisis situation should do. My initial request was \$20 million yet we received only \$2 million in grants. Now the costs are hundreds of millions.

The EPA also failed to sound the alarm. When I reached out to the EPA for guidance, I received assurances about the review process but the true risks were not revealed. We know now that children were poisoned with lead—and we found out because local doctors like Dr. Mona Hanna-Attisha analyzed health data themselves despite resistance from the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services. Flint's citizens have fought so hard and families have endured so much. It was local citizens and doctors who forced the acknowledgment of mistakes. I commend their courage and perseverance.

The support provided by the county, state and federal agencies already has been important but there is far more to be done. Thankfully we all worked together to get Detroit water back into Flint's system last October while I was in office. It was the fastest way to get optimized corrosion control back into Flint's system and start to limit exposure to lead and contamination.

I appreciate the committee's focus on solutions. From my perspective, the current plan from the Governor to address the water problems, along with the related health, education, neighborhood and economic issues, misses a couple of key points.

From what I see, there needs to be a serious educational plan for the community schools. The current items are about delivering social services and nutrition through schools but first and foremost students in Flint deserve the best educational opportunities available. Education is truly the most valuable assistance. Where is the leadership from the State to work with partners to provide exceptional educational opportunities to Flint's children and into college and career training?

Second the economic development goals are woefully lacking. During my time in office, I worked closely with the local, regional, state and federal economic development entities to create and retain an average of 1,000 jobs per year—and that goal was met. The Governor's plan is only aiming to serve 500 new job seekers over 2 years. In January 2016 Flint had a 9.9% joblessness rate and 3,500 unemployed workers--and many more ~~dropped~~ out of the labor market. Given these numbers, the state plan is to move unemployment from 9.9% to 8.4% in 2 years—that is ~~unachievable~~ and unacceptable, even without the water crisis.

Flint is a city worth investing in. Flint's students and workers deserve the same opportunities as everyone in America. A long-term plan is already in place, the Master Plan for a Sustainable Flint, with action items that received unanimous support from the Planning Commission and the Flint City Council. Mayor Weaver has plans for the infrastructure improvements and lead service line replacements. With true partnerships and the right amount of public investment, Flint will be a model 21<sup>st</sup> Century city. I thank each of you for your efforts to address the water crisis and to move Flint forward.

*And I look forward to your questions.*  
Thank you.